"To the righteous soul will be said: O (thou) soul, in (complete) rest and satisfaction! Come back to your Lord, well pleased (yourself), and well pleasing unto Him! Enter you, then, among my devotees! And enter you My Heaven!" [Al-Qur'an 89:27]

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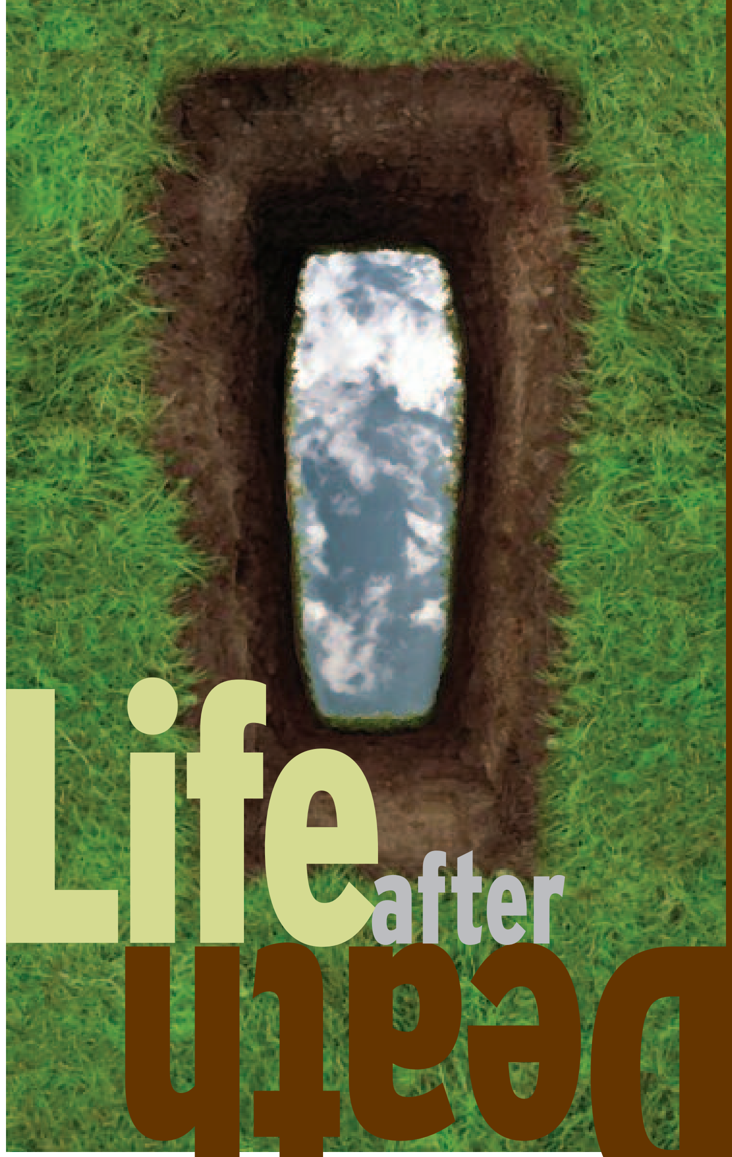
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In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

"To the righteous soul will be said: O (thou) soul, in (complete) rest and satisfaction! Come back to your Lord, well pleased (yourself), and well pleasing unto Him! Enter you, then, among my devotees! And enter you My Heaven!"

[Al-Qur'an 89: 27-28]

In Islam, an individual's life after death or their Hereafter, is very closely shaped by their present life. Life after death begins with the resurrection of man, after which there will come a moment when every human will be shaken as they are confronted with their intentions and deeds, good and bad, and even by their failure to do good in this life. On the Day of Judgment the entire record of people from the age of puberty will be presented before God. God will weigh everyone's good and bad deeds according to His Mercy and His Justice, forgiving many sins and multiplying many good deeds. One who excels in goodness will be rewarded generously, whereas one whose evils and wrongs overweigh his good deeds will be punished. Those who emerge successful in this judgment will go to paradise and the doors of eternal bliss will be opened to them. Those who are condemned and deserve punishment will be sent to Hell - the abode of fire and torture.

"Those who disbelieve say: The Hour will never come unto us. Say: Nay, by my Lord, it is coming unto you surely. (He is) the knower of the unseen. Not an atom's weight, or less than that or greater, escapes Him in the heavens or in the earth, but it is in a clear Record. That He may reward those who believe and do good works. For them are pardon and a rich provision. But those who strive against our revelations, challenging (Us), theirs will be a painful doom of wrath." [Al-Qur'an: 34: 3-5]

The need to believe in life after death

Belief in life after death has always been part of the teachings of the Prophets and is an essential condition of being a Muslim. Whenever we are asked to do something, it is our very nature to think about its benefits and its costs. We regard a useless action as unnecessary and are not prepared to waste our time doing it. Similarly, we are not very eager to avoid a thing that is harmless. The deeper our conviction about the usefulness of something, the firmer our response to it will be. The more doubtful we are about its usefulness, the more wavering and shaky would be our attitude. After all, why does a child put his hand in fire? Because he is not sure that fire burns. Why does he evade studying? Because he does not fully grasp the importance and benefits of education.

Belief in Life after Death divides people into three categories.

FIRST, there are those who do not believe in the Hereafter and regard life on this earth as the only life and nothing destroys them except time. Naturally, they judge something to be good if it produces desirable results and evil if it brings about undesirable results.

SECOND, there are those who do not deny the Hereafter, but they depend on the intercession or atonement of someone to absolve them of their sins. Among them are some who regard themselves as God's chosen people, who will receive only nominal punishment, however grave their sins may be. This deprives them of the moral advantage, which they could have derived from their belief in the Hereafter. As a result their behavior becomes very much like that of those who deny the Hereafter.

THIRD, are those who believe in the Hereafter and do not delude themselves that they have any special relationship with God or that anyone can intercede on their behalf. They hold themselves accountable for their actions and their belief in the Hereafter becomes a great moral force. As a result they find a permanent guard, stationed within them, which cautions and admonishes them whenever they deviate from the right path. There may be no court to summon them, no policemen to apprehend them and no public opinion to pressure them. Instead the guard within them is ever alert and ready to remind them when they transgress. The consciousness of this inner presence makes them fear doing anything that is prohibited. Should they succumb to temptation and violate the law of God, they are ever ready to offer sincere regrets and to enter a firm contract with God not to repeat the same mistake in the future.

"They say: There is nothing but our present life; we die, and we live, and nothing but time destroys us. Of that they have no knowledge; they merely conjecture. And when our revelations are recited to them, their only argument is that they say: Bring us our fathers, if you speak truly." [Al-Qur'an 45:24]

A person who is focused on successes or failures in this world alone will be concerned with the benefits and harms that come to him in this life only. He may be reluctant to do good deeds that have no worldly benefit. Similarly, he may not be prepared to stop doing awrong act that will not harm him in this world.

On the other hand, a person who believes in life after death would look upon all worldly gains and losses as temporary and would not put at stake eternal bliss for a transitory gain. Belief in the next world instills in one the desire to do well and avoid the wrong, however costly it may be in terms of worldly sacrifices.

"What! Do those who seek after evil ways think that We shall hold them equal with those who believe and do righteous deeds, - that equal with their life and their death? Ill is the judgment that they make. God created the heavens and the earth for just ends, and in order that each soul may find the recompense of what it has earned, and none of them be wronged." [Al-Qur'an 45:21]

There is a big difference in the way of life of the two types of people. For one, the idea of a good act may be limited to its value in this temporary life: for example gains in money, property, public recognition or similar things which give one position, power, reputation or worldly happiness.

Such things become the objectives of life and they may not deter one from pursuing cruel and unjust means in their achievement. In contrast, for a believer, all that pleases God is good and all that invokes His displeasure and wrath is evil. A good act for a believer will remain good even if it brings no personal benefit in this world.

A believer will be confident that God will reward him in the eternal life and that would be the real success. Similarly, they would not fall a prey to evil deeds merely for some worldly gain, for they would know that even if they escape punishment in this short worldly life, they would still have to answer to God.

True justice becomes apparent by believing in Life after Death.

God created people and made them responsible for their actions. In this world, we notice that the virtuous often live in a wretched state while the wicked often seem to have the good things in life.

Innocent people often suffer at the hands of exploiters and criminals, who seem to gain rather than suffer by their crimes in this world. If there were no future life in which the virtuous are rewarded and the vicious are punished, there would be no justice. There would be no point in creating people with a conscience and in sending Prophets to remind them of their responsibility.

"We shall set up scales of justice for the day of Judgment, so that not a soul will be dealt with unjustly in the least. And if there be (no more than) the weight of a mustard seed, We will bring it (to account): And enough are We to take account." [Al-Qur'an: 21:47]

God is the Most Just; He will establish justice among all His creatures and no one can escape from God. Islam, therefore, places great emphasis on having absolute assurance of the Hereafter. This assurance should be similar to the certainty we have in death (which can overcome us at any time). Therefore, striving to earn the pleasure of God becomes the objective of life.